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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON
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House of Representatives
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02-55

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November 4, 2003

RECEIVED

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

WTB
Public Safety
PV
MKP
3375

Re: WT Docket Number 02-55 (Public Safety on 800 Megahertz Band)

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, I have heard from first responders and public safety leaders in my district and around the country about the critical issue of public safety interference. In fact, in a recent survey I conducted of first responders in my district, nearly half of the respondents listed communications as one of their top three homeland security priorities.

The fact that public safety officials are worried about their safety and the safety of those they protect because of problems with the spectrum is of great concern to me, and it points to an urgent need to ensure that our first responders are equipped with the proper tools for rapid and reliable communications.


Interference with public safety communications is an increasing problem throughout the country and will only worsen as commercial wireless operators and public safety entities continue to enhance their communications systems. This type of interference must be remedied in a comprehensive manner. The risk to our first responders is too great to rely on an approach based on resolving interference only after it occurs in a particular location.

As you know, the primary cause of this interference is the close proximity of public safety and commercial wireless operations within the 800 MHz spectrum band. In order to virtually eliminate the probability of interference, the 800 MHz spectrum needs to be realigned. I support a solution that accomplishes this goal while simultaneously providing the public safety community with much-needed additional spectrum at no cost to their organizations or to local governments, many of which are now struggling through fiscal crises of their own.

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This is a critical issue for our country, and we cannot afford to stop short in this endeavor, or rely upon a piecemeal solution. I appreciate your interest in addressing this problem and urge you and your fellow Commissioners to act expeditiously to realign the 800 MHz spectrum with the best interests of our public safety officials, and all American citizens, in mind. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Kathleen Q. Aberathy
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein
The Honorable Michael J. Copps
The Honorable Kevin J. Martin
Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, FCC Secretary

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